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FARMERS AND THE WAR.

“ MAKE HAY WHILE THE SUN
SHINES.”

INTERESTING ADDRESS AT
CHICHESTER.

SOME USEFUL HINTS.

The farmers of West Sussex are very much up-to-date nowadays, and on Wednesday afternoon a large number of them attended at the Chichester Corn Exchange to hear an address by Mr. William Lawson, the Agricultural Organizer for West Sussex, on the subject of the most suitable crops to grow, the manuring of crops, the feeding of live stock, and other matters arising from the crisis.

The meeting was held under the auspices of the Agricultural Committee of the County Council, whose Chairman, Mr. F. H. Padwick, J.P., presided.

Mr. Lawson said it was at all times the duty of the farmer so to farm his land and manage his stock that his output might be as large as possible consistent with economical production, and in the present crisis this duty became imperative. It was agreed that the prosperity of old established countries largely depended upon the intensiveness of their agriculture; and they were now concerned as to the modifications which would be necessary to enable them to produce as much as possible of essential foods, and to meet the changed conditions of the markets owing to the sources of supplies being restricted. It was advisable that every farmer should utilize what land could be spared for the purpose of providing green food in the spring and to meet any serious curtailment of the quantity of imported concentrated foods. As a part of the harvest on the Continent had been lost and there would be districts where less wheat than usual could be sown, it followed that Continental buyers would have to go elsewhere, and they would be competing with us for foreign supplies.

More Wheat the Better.

Consequently the more wheat we grew at home the better for the country. There was no compulsion to follow a certain rotation of crops on arable land. Wheat could be grown after wheat, provided the land was suitably manured. There was a lot of inferior pasture land which would be better for a course of cropping, and the present was an opportune time to bring it into cultivation. It would be a patriotic action, both on the part of the tenant and landlord, if this were done. Speaking of potatoes he said this was one of the crops that could be grown to meet the demand, and if wheat increased in price the demand for potatoes would most likely increase. Every care should be taken of the present crop, and a good area planted next year. Farmers would be affected by the cutting off of the supplies of potash manure from Germany, but potash they could obtain themselves by burning seaweed, hedge clippings and weeds, the ashes of which should be collected and stored. Turning to the subject of live stock Mr. Lawson said it was important that the number of live stock should be maintained, because its diminution would be a serious matter for agriculturalists, and conse-

quently for the nation. It was the duty of every farmer to refrain from disposing of stock for killing purposes if that stock would under ordinary conditions be retained for breeding purposes. It was also desirable that as many calves should be reared as possible. Crushed oats and separated milk were an efficient and economical food for them, while bran was now recognised as a valuable fattening food for cattle.

Higher Prices in the Future.

The Chairman said the Board of Agriculture, on the advice of the Consultative Committee, was asking the Provincial Councils under the Agricultural Education Scheme, and the Clerks of County Councils to call a conference to consider the very question which Mr. Lawson had anticipated, and he was very proud they were to be the fore in this matter. It was very important in the national interest, and in their own, that the wheat area should be largely increased this year. There was no doubt that a large proportion of the foodstuffs which usually came to this country would be diverted to feeding the starving populations of the countries now at war. There must be an enormous Continental demand. Therefore next year the price of wheat ought to be a good deal higher than it had been for a long time. For the next five or six months it was not anticipated there would be a very considerable rise in the price of wheat. Probably 42s. would be the average, but after five or six months a considerable rise was anticipated.

Town Councils and Horses.

Replying to a question, the Chairman said he had made inquiries whether horse labour was needed by farmers in this district. In some towns the Councils had offered farmers the use of the town's horses if they were required, and whether the Chichester City Council would be prepared to let out horses if required was a question which was well worth consideration. As a matter of fact only 4,000 agricultural horses had been taken from the whole of England for the war, and the total taken altogether was 9,000.

Mr. Sadler asked whether the Government would guarantee 40s. a quarter for wheat.

The Chairman: They are considering that and I should not be surprised if they make a statement on it in a day or two.

The Chairman also stated that it was suggested farmers should make cheese with their surplus milk, but he thought if they made butter and gave the skimmed milk to the calves and pigs they would be doing just as much to provide food for the nation.

In conclusion the Chairman said this meeting had proved the usefulness of Mr. Lawson's work.

Mr. John Langmead voiced the thanks of those present to the Chairman and Mr. Lawson.